Fund (NCCF) etc. for the drought of 2002-03. Taking into account all relevant factors and the approval by the High Level Committee (HLC) and Task Force on Drought Management, total assistance of Rs. 123.51 crores from NCCF and 17.20 lakh MTs of foodgrains for relief employment were provided to the State for the drought 2002-03. In addition, the Railways arranged free transportation of foder to the drought affected areas in the State.

Prices of agricultural commodities

3175. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether prices of agricultural commodities are declining rapidly during the last few years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the corrective measures taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) According to the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) with base 1993-94 = 100, the prices of agricultural commodities increased by 3.6 per cent during the year ended 2nd August, 2003 compared with 3.3 per cent and 3.7 per cent respectively during the corresponding previous two years, i.e. years ended on 3rd August, 2002 and 4th August, 2001.

(c) To minimize the impact of fluctuations in prices the Government announces Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for major kharif and rabi crops. MSPs enable the farmers to sell their produce at remunerative prices whenever the market prices fall below the MSP.

Milk and vegetable booth at BKS Marg

3176. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is no DMS stall or Mother Dairy milk and vegetable booth at Baba Kharag Singh Marg, New Delhi, near Gole Dakhana and as a result thereof the residents of these areas and of adjoining areas such as Mahadev Road and Pant Marg are facing difficulties for years in making ourchases of articles of daily use; and

(b) if so, by when a milk and a vegetable booth will be opened in the area?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV) : (a) There are two stalls of DMS, two milk stalls and one fruit and vegetable stall of Mother Dairy functioning in and around Baba Kharag Singh Marg.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Scheme for Assam

3177. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to launch any scheme for the farmers of Assam;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the necessary steps taken by Government in this respect?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV) : (a) to (d) The Central Government is implementing a number of Centrally Sponsored Schemes for the development of agriculture in Assam which directly and indirectly benefit the farmers of the States. The Central Government has also launched Technology Mission on Horticulture for the North-Eastern States including Assam for intensive development of horticulture in the area. A list of Centrally Sponsored Schemes being implemented in Assam is given below and details of funds released and expenditure incurred under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes during 2002-03 are given in the enclosed Statement (*See* below) :

1. Macro Management Schemes;
2. On-farm Water Management;
3. Oilseed Production Programme;
4. National Pulses Development Project;
5. Oil Palm Development Programme;